

REMARKS

Summary of the Claims

With the Office Action mailed February 19, 2010, claims 10, 12-15, 18, 20-22, 26-29 and 31-38 were pending in the application. Claims 10, 12-15, 18, 32, 36 and 37 have been rejected and claims 20-22, 26-29, 33-35 and 38 have been withdrawn from consideration.

With the present amendments, claims 12, 18, 31, 32 and 36 are amended. Claims 20, 28, 33 and 34 are also amended although they have been withdrawn from consideration. Among the amended claims, claim 31 is amended to accept the Examiner's suggestion while claims 12, 18, 20, 28, 31-34 and 36 are amended to allow them to be dependent from claim 31. No new matter has been added by any of the above amendments. Claims 10, 37 and 38 have been canceled without prejudice. With the above amendments, claims 12-15, 18, 20-22, 26-29 and 31-36 are pending in the application.

Election/Restriction Requirements

Applicant acknowledges the Examiner's statements regarding the election/restrictions of claims 33-35 and 38 and the status of claims 20-22, 26-29, 33-35 and 38 that have been withdrawn from consideration. However, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the restriction requirement and also requests the Examiner's consideration of claims 20-22, 26-29 and 33-35 because these claims depend from claim 31 which is now allowable and which links all the claimed inventions. The reasons why claim 31 is allowable are discussed later in the "Allowable Subject Matter" section of this response.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claim 37 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Weinstein (US 5,356,101). Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested because claim 37 has been canceled without prejudice.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 10, 12-15, 32, 36 and 37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Grant (US 3,217,954) in view of Behrens. Claim 18 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Grant in view of Castelli (US 3,002,668). Claim 18 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Grant in view of Behrens, as applied to claim 10, and in view of Castelli. In view of these rejections, claims 10 and 37 are canceled without prejudice and claims 12, 18, 32 and 36 are amended to be dependent from claim 31 that is believed allowable for the reasons discussed in the "Allowable Subject Matter" section of this response. Claims 13-15 depend from claim 12. For these reasons, claims 12-15, 18, 32 and 36 are allowable. Withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103 is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner states that claim 31 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Following the Examiner's statement, Applicant has rewritten claim 31 in independent form including all of the limitations of claim 10. As such, claim 10 is allowable. Claims 20-22, 26-29 and 33-35 depend, directly or indirectly, from claim 31 and thus are also allowable.

Conclusion

Applicant believes that the foregoing amendments to the claims should

place the present application in condition for allowance. It is earnestly requested that the amended claim be entered, that the application, as a whole, receive favorable reconsideration and that claims 12-15, 18, 20-22, 26-29 and 31-36 be allowed.

Respectfully submitted,

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